

**TITLE:****BIG SANDY ENERGY PROJECT  
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

Draft ( X )      Final (   )

**EIS NUMBERS:**BLM/AZ/PL-01/004  
DOE/EIS-0315**LEAD AGENCIES:**U.S. Department of Energy, Western Area Power Administration  
U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management**COOPERATING AGENCIES:**Arizona Department of Transportation  
Arizona Department of Water Resources  
Arizona Game and Fish Department  
Hualapai Tribe  
Mohave County (through the Planning and Zoning Department)  
U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service**ABSTRACT**

Caithness Big Sandy LLC (Caithness) proposes to construct and operate a 720-megawatt (MW) natural gas-fired, combined-cycle power plant and ancillary facilities on private land about 4 miles southeast of Wikieup, in the southeastern portion of Mohave County, Arizona. The power plant would be interconnected to the regional electric transmission grid through an existing 500-kilovolt (kV) transmission line owned and operated by the Western Area Power Administration (Western) and others which passes through the power plant site. The plant would be a "merchant plant", which means that it would not be owned by a utility. There is currently no long-term commitment or obligation by any utility to purchase the capacity and energy generated by the power plant. Caithness has applied to interconnect its proposed power plant with the existing Mead-Phoenix Project 500-kV transmission line. Construction of segments of the access road, natural gas pipeline, and water pipelines and electric and control lines would require a grant of right-of-way across Federal lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Water necessary for power plant and agricultural operations would be provided from wells drilled on private land in the vicinity of the proposed power plant site. The proposed access road to the power plant and well field would extend eastward to the proposed power plant site from U.S. Highway 93, crossing approximately 2 miles of public and private lands. The high-pressure natural gas pipeline would extend approximately 39 miles across private and public lands to the site from existing pipelines owned by several natural gas suppliers located along the Interstate 40 corridor. Agricultural development would occur on private lands adjacent to the access road immediately southwest of the proposed power plant site. The EIS describes existing environmental conditions as well as potential direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the proposed action. BLM will be deciding whether or not whether or not to authorize rights-of-way on public lands administered by the BLM for portions of the proposed natural gas pipeline, access road, water pipelines and electric and control lines. Western will be deciding whether or not to execute an agreement with Caithness for interconnection with the Mead-Phoenix Project.

Comments on this Draft EIS should be sent only to Western Area Power Administration at the address below and must be postmarked no later than **August 6, 2001**.

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